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Experiential Knowledge: Dance as Source for Popular Music Historiography

'There was no divide between punter and artist within this giant Herbal Tea Party [club night in Manchester] bubble, so it was just the most easiest place to express yourself: mad, bad or sad. Get it on the dancefloor. You know, that's where I found my family and that's where a lot of us got our motivation to do other nights' (anonymous).

Introduction

This article is concerned with the retrieval of sources in popular music historiography. It discusses the methodological and conceptual challenges that popular music historians might encounter when faced with cultures or practices that cannot be fully captured through conventional paradigmatic principles of the treatment of sources. Discussing an over-reliance on written documentation and a focus on what is identified as theoretical knowledge, a case is made for the inclusion of experiential knowledge as source for popular music history. Understood to be contextualized knowledge that can only be gained through participation in a music event, the article identifies dance as a form of experiential knowledge, which can be used to describe and explain music events such as raves. This is, however, only possible if we rethink the role of the participants themselves in the production of our narratives. Retrieving their experience as dancers is a challenge for popular music historians, as it points at issues of access and translatability. Considering dance as a form of memory means to invite the writing of history 'from the (dance) floor'. Dance as experiential knowledge has to be identified and recorded, and the dancers themselves are crucial to assisting with the decoding process so that dance cultures can perhaps be better explained, and their music can be better described for their ability to facilitate dance and encourage embodiment.

This discussion on source identification and retrieval has been prompted by issues that were encountered during 'The Lapsed Clubber', a mapping project that focusses on source retrieval for producing popular music history[1]. The project set out to uncover the hidden stories of Greater Manchester's rave era from 1985 to 1995. In previous research, I experienced many instances where members of the original rave community articulated their frustration about the simplification of Manchester's rave narrative through local and national media (for example, a focus on Madchester, which covers a period of only about two years and a handful of bands). Aware of the discourses through which rave history is told, they contested the level of truthfulness of the treatment of 'their' history, as they see it. Furthermore, ravers expressed their dismay at the authority that is assigned by popular music scholars as well as the media to people 'who were not there' and whose accounts of events are used as sources. By way of contrast to such 'unreliable' sources and narratives, The Lapsed Clubber sought to create an innovative space in the form of a map of rave locations, to which ravers could add their memories. Both the actual locations as well as the tags through which the ravers can qualify their memories, were contributed by the ravers themselves and point at a number of issues and queries that this paper aims to address.

In order to understand these specific issues, I first provide a brief outline of the conventional narration of rave histories to which ravers in my research object or seek to add a different perspective I point at existing discourses and explain common reference points in order to show why and how certain aspects of conventional rave history are contested as not capturing the essence of events or developments The Lapsed Clubber project evidences affect as the crucial element by which (ephemeral) communities and scenes have been created. Memories on the Lapsed Clubber Audio Map reveal experiential knowledge and memory in

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[1] The Project "Memories, Communities & Belonging: The Lapsed Clubber Heritage Map of Greater Manchester 1985-1995" (OH-16-02562) was funded by the Heritage Lottery and resulted in the Lapsed Clubber Audio Map, to be found at https://www.mdmarchive.co.uk/map/the-lapsed-clubber-audio-map.

the form of dance as an approach that is important for the ravers' understanding of their own participation in musical life, but which is rarely conceptualized in scholarly writing.

The final section of the article is therefore an exploration of the opportunities that an inclusion of experiential knowledge and dance as/in memory offers to scholars of popular music historiography. To 'get a feel' for an event through accounts of experiential knowledge points to the importance of embodiment and emotions as having a place in history. Such approach does not necessarily challenge the evidence and existing narratives but complements them and adds complexity to an otherwise simplified tale. The importance and relevance to popular music historians of certain events remain undisputed but our understanding of their contribution to history through their description of a social atmosphere or mood might offer explanations for musical and social developments, and the intrinsic motivations and emotional investments of participants. To include aspects of embodiment and emotion calls into question the need to have a 'definitive' history of a culture, as the focus shifts towards a richness of accounts that provide a range of perspectives. Finally, such spaces of source identification and retrieval have to be actively created and ask for innovative methods in historical research.

Rave Histories

A rave is generally understood as'a party or event attended by large numbers of young people, involving drug use and dancing to fast, electronic music (Lexico 2020). .

In academia, popular music historians attempt to flesh out this very broad description of this event by addressing the historical changes that raves have undergone. The most common approach with which raves are historicized academically is through a locating in relation to commerce, assuming a progression towards the maximization of profits, which is a form of narration that is also supported by many DJs. One such example of a definition of rave is provided by Carrington and Wilson:

> 'Initially associated with the large, illegal warehouse parties that were held in and around London, Manchester and other cities across England during the summers of 1988 and 1989, 'rave' has since transformed into a multi-million pound global phenomenon that operates alongside, within and sometimes against the global circuits of capital.' (2004: 66)

Raves are treated here as a phenomenon with clear origins in terms of both time and place, something that is contested in the field and most poignantly portrayed by St John (2009). He dedicates a whole page to the listing of 'the varied and interconnected beginnings, migrations, and resurgences of rave culture' (2009: 2-3), citing genres and scenes, techniques, technologies, and locations. Scott (2014) argues that in order for popular music history to be narrated, sometimes origins have to be invented. This is the case for raves, and most scholars seem to agree on the notion that raves started in the 1980s and grew to be mass phenomena by the mid-1990s (Anderson 2009; Sicko 1999; Till 2010). These gatherings are often associated

with a particular type of electronic music (driven by the beat) and a particular type of drug (Ecstasy). This very general description of a rave, does not encompass the historical variety of raves and their changes through time. What this notion of a rave points to, however, is the discourses through which raves have been historicized and fossilized in British cultural memory and which pertain to a particular conjunction of musicand drugs.

Drugs

The most powerful of these discourses is, without doubt, the portrayal of raves as no more than drug parties. Mainly driven by British newspapers reporting on drug-related incidents in the 1980s, this coverage is today considered to have started a moral panic: an exclusive focus on the use of drugs and a condemnation of raves (Redhead 1997: 56-60). Through this discourse, a moral demarcation line is drawn, which distinguishes those in the right and those in the wrong. By doing so, the whole event is disregarded as a cultural phenomenon worthy of researching its practices and the meaning for its participants. The drug discourse continues to be influential, as raves are persistently analysed through this lens by newspapers such as The Sun (Sweeney & Pocklington 2020), Daily Mail (Carr 2020), or The Times (Collins 2020). For this kind of history, sources exist in form of written documents that can be traced along a timeline and are accessible through the newspapers' own archives. This retrieval process excludes all other forms of documentation, and an uncritical assessment of these sources leads to a focus on one particular practice while ignoring others, for example the consumption of music and experiences by those for whom rave is not associated with drugs.

Music

There is no clear definition of rave as a musical genre, because competing narratives about the origin of raves and their musical influences (Belle-Fortune 2005; Goulding, Shankar & Elliott

2002; Haslam 1999, Melville 2020; Reynolds 2017) mean that there are a number of classifications of style and genre permitted to describe what is played at events. In the UK, the umbrella term that describes such variety of musical styles can be argued to have been invented (see Scott 2014 for examples of invention in popular music historiography): acid house. It is conventionally narrated through a story of friendship, holidays in Ibiza, and the import of the music that four friends experienced there. According to DJ Paul Oakenfold (quoted in Warren 2007), rave was born when he returned with his friends Johnny Walker, Danny Rampling and Nicky Holloway from a holiday in Ibiza. They had been to the nightclub Amnesia and, based on that concept, started three of the most iconic clubs in London: Spectrum, Shoom, and Trip. This is a convenient story, that tells the history of raves through familiar dates, locations, and events, and it can be easily retrieved and repeated. The retrieval includes interviews with the four people themselves, some of whom are famous DJs by now and whose role as historians will be discussed later. Melville argues that the ideological function of this persistent 'acid origin myth' 'can be read in part as an index of a genuine desire to overcome divisions of class, race and gender' (2020: 145-46), and perhaps also as an attempt to consolidate a variety of musical influences, various origins, developments and locations Melville shows how Black musical influences are absent from conventional rave histories, providing evidence for a lack of interest to present rave music as a 'product of distinct histories and intentions, of tactical alliances between different communities with a shared desire to produce their own culture (Melville 2020: 89-90).

A musicological discussion of rave's music is interesting for it seems to show how a discourse can be informed by a particular aesthetic judgement. Wald (2014) talks about narratives of power in academia and the impact it has on popular music history. Such power relations are manifested in the discussion on particular genres or artists, but also through those performers or types of music that are not researched or written about – those who constitute

history's silences. These power relations (and silences) can be understood as contributing to the formation of the musical canon, and rave's music is, perhaps unsurprisingly, absent from it as a focus on the beat and rhythm is considered inferior to a composition with a harmonic idea (MacDonald 2008) Siegfried (2019) confirms this view when arguing that taste cultures are visible in both journalistic and scholarly writing on popular music, as aesthetic judgements are applied. He goes even further and argues that popular music historians use the criteria of their specific taste cultures to distinguish themselves from the very world of the popular and everyday or 'fan' and consumer discourse. He hints at a separation of what I from now on label 'theoretical' knowledge and 'experiential' knowledge. Theoretical knowledge is treated as fact and indisputable pieces of information, which can be right or wrong. In rave histories, theoretical knowledge can be retrieved through documents and is considered to be objective. In dealing with pop, this writing can include dates and times, ticket sales, track listings, notation. Written accounts of a rave might feature a passive voice which describes an event rather than articulates an opinion. Such documents might include police reports or minutes of parliamentary debates. These factual and evidence-based accounts are the opposite of journalistic opinion pieces such as those that contributed to the moral panics in the UK in the early 1990s. Experiential knowledge takes a subjective perspective. It is personal. It combines senses, emotions, feelings, perceptions, and moods into a unique response that is not confined to written forms and evidenced through the body. If theoretical knowledge is the knowledge about the music, experiential knowledge is contextual and makes one feel and respond to music through participation in the musical event. The aesthetic judgement about rave is generally formed on the basis of theoretical knowledge and might refer to criteria that stem from historic notions of what constitutes music, their compositional techniques, or their performance. For example, in MacDonald's (2008) biography on the Beatles, one can read at length about the

superiority of a melody over the beat, a 'natural' way of composing and performing, and a rant against everything that comes with automation :

'Dominated by the synthetic slam of the sequenced off-beat crashing down tyrannically like some monstrous industrial time-keeping device - modern songs are regularised and formularised, their harmonic movements banal and predictable, their vocal lines devoid of independent melody and constructed from prefabricated melodic/lyric clichés bolted together as if by mechanics on an assembly-line' (387-8). All of these criteria evidence a particular way of thinking of and hearing popular music, and one that refers to an aesthetic judgement of somebody that assigns greater value to theoretical knowledge than to experiential knowledge. Wald (2014) points out how this kind of judgement is not necessarily linked to music that is currently popular and expressed through measures such as sales figures, downloads or streaming hit lists. The frequent dismissal by commentators in the media and academia of the music of EDM superstars such as David Guetta or Tiesto, and categories such as trance, might be challenged by the inclusion of experiential knowledge in our accounts of popular music.

An attempt to avoid the limits and absences of histories based on such aesthetic judgment is through a narration of rave's history through technological development and the progress of musical instruments. Stubbs (2018), for example, locates raves in a history that began with the invention of proto-electronic instruments in the 18th century. His locating of rave music in this tradition speaks of a need to present the search for new sounds in the tradition of classical composers and their ground-breaking artistic innovations. Indirectly, Stubbs hints at an aesthetic judgement, where the composer (or DJ) is presented as the genius artist whose place in history appears undisputed. This kind of history is also based on written sources. There are details available about production lines of instruments, the performances enabled by new instruments, or the appearance of new sounds in compositions. Most importantly, the

compositions or performances are ascribed to the artist as composer or player, and confirm the very discourse that disregards particular DJs, genres and tracks. Such histories are linked to already established, canonical events, developments and understandings of music. A major aspect of rave is the dancer, although their part in understanding the music is rarely discussed. In Stubbs' account this figure of the dancing raver is completely absent apart from being a passive consumer, and this might be the reason why in the conventional reading of rave history the raver is presented as an individual with no role in defining the meaning, significance and experience of music at all. Attempts have been made to describe raves as participatory events to which all people contribute equally (Ott and Herman 2003; Till 2010), but this description of a rave would require a shift away from power structures, ideologies and aesthetic judgement towards a recognition of the historical importance of ephemeral communities.

The practice of dance is considered to be part of leisure. It is perhaps because of this frame that dance as a social practice that has significance being the personal realm is seldom considered. Ehrenreich's (2007) historical account of dance as collective joy is one of the few exceptions, and it would provide a great starting point to acknowledge dance as a source and document for narrating popular music history. McNeill (1995) presents dance as a social practice, through which people establish emotional links. He understands embodiment as crucial for the understanding of group dynamics and motivations when he argues that moving together in synchrony leads to emotional bonding, thus contradicting an aesthetic dismissal of the beat and its regularity as insignificant. McNeill describes this behavior as 'muscular bonding', and proposes to read it as a capacity to increase cooperation and solidarity:

'Human beings desperately need to belong to communities that give guidance and meaning to their lives; and moving rhythmically while giving voice together is the surest, most speedy, and efficacious way of creating and sustaining such communities

that our species have ever hit upon. Words and ideals matter and are always invoked; but keeping in time together in time arouses warm emotions of collective solidarity and erases personal frustrations as words, by themselves, cannot do.' (2005: 152)

McNeill's approach would also be useful to consider, but as part of the discourse of hedonism, dance is all too often understood as being self-indulgent and without social purpose. In rave history, it is best understood with a recurring reference to the duration of a rave and an attempted escape from social control mechanisms such as the idea of a working week or the working day, or regulated hours of productivity. One of the key events for rave's history is the Castlemorton Common, and its extensive media coverage at the time confirms the notion of hedonism as negatively connotated. The event took place from 22nd to 29th May 1992, and was attended by over 25,000 people. The BBC referred to it as 'the rave that changed the law' (Chester 2017), reporting on it as an illegal event lasting for days, at which thousands of people danced to loud music that featured repetitive beats. This event acts as evidence for a type of rave that has been canonized in British popular music history, but also for a particular reading of raves. The parliamentary discussions that were initiated by the Castlemorton Common (HC Deb 12 June 1992) show how raves were treated as part of a moral discourse about mass phenomena and pleasures. The result of those discussions was the criminalization of raves through the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, which is another key event for rave's narration: it includes references to the number of people, its location and duration, and a focus on repetitive beats, but the practice and importance of dance is absent.

The challenge for popular music historiography - and rave in particular - lies in the perceived absence of sources documenting the significance and experience of dance as a practice of participation and ways of understanding it. Melville (2020) is rightly concerned therefore about

the disappearance of dance cultures that are not documented through the conventional methods of writing and documentation. It would, for example be impossible to understand the practice of dance in a McNeillian sense if written accounts are based exclusively on observations. The same could be said about images or recordings, where emotional bonding is not necessarily visible. The experience of shared bodily and cognitive experiences has to be documented differently in order to become recognizable. Especially with regard to lived cultures it would be difficult to argue that such sources do not exist, but they challenge the superiority of theoretical knowledge over experiential knowledge,the authority of the popular music historian, andthe kind of history that can be produced

The DJ is often perceived as the authoritative figure who is be able to comment on and narrate rave's history. They are a 'popular' music historian of raves. Numerous histories have been published by famous DJs (see Garnier 2003; Goldie & Thompson 2018; Haslam 1999, 2001; Oakenfold 2017), and they link personal histories with general developments of a musical genre. Although such histories could be considered as including experiential knowledgethey do so from a particular perspective, and often it is one that confirms authority with regard to technical or musical innovation and one's defining role in an already established canon. When Laurent Garnier, for example, describes his experiences as DJ and dancer as exchanging energies with other people, he writes refers to a totality of energies in the dance space. At the same time, however, he confirms the superior position of the DJ when he describes how the mood of the DJ is transmitted via speakers to the dancers who are consuming it (2003: 208) Such histories often establish an affective relationship between the star and the reader/viewer, and they are also substantiated with theoretical knowledge about performances, venues, critical reviews or radio appearances. Although the stories of DJs are personal accounts of a lived experience, they perform and contribute towards a public persona or image that the DJ has built up and might, therefore, be skewed and self-interested. The history of raves told

only through their most famous representatives is, therefore, problematic, as it excludes the everyday sociality of rave's other participants.

Journalistic writing on rave is equally plentiful and, like those of DJs, also often includes personal accounts of rave's development over the years. One could argue that journalists have a similar interest in securing their place in rave history as being their authoritative voices, and this is often done through confirmingconfirming existing discourses (see, for example, Collin 2018; Haslam 1999, 2001; Melville 2020; Porschardt 1997; Reynolds 2017) and one's position in it. Similar to DJs, journalists (re)produce personal rave histories for a particular audience, which appreciates the combination of knowledge about an event and its historic contextualization.

At this point, it is important to distinguish between knowledge about an event, which would prove that one was present, and experiential knowledge. DJs would lack an insight 'from the floor' altogether, and journalistic writing rarely goes beyond the descriptive. There are different types of experiences, and the experiential knowledge of a person might very according to their mood, whether or not they have come with friends, their position on or off the dance floor, knowledge of the music, and many more. It would, therefore, be wrong to assume that one's presence at a rave leads to an experience that is shared by every participant. The opposite is the case, and for popular music historians, experiential knowledge here should be understood as accumulative and contributed to by many participants. Academic writing might feature personal experiential knowledge, but this has not helped find an agreement about the nature and development of raves, and their social significance. Returning to the Carrington and Wilson's (2004) definition of raves, it is important to note the uneasiness with which raves are positioned in the context of commercial success. On the one hand, there appears to be a dominant narrative that understands raves as having developed from underground to mainstream, from DiY to professional and commercial practice. On the other, there are also

many forms of raves that do not fit this definition, as raves cannot operate 'alongside, within and sometimes against the global circuits of capital' (2004: 66), all at the same time. The narration of raves through commercial success is, at least partially, unsuitable to explain all aspects of rave history.

Perhaps because of the problematic relationship of raves towards profitmaking objectives, other scholars agree on a definition of raves as being constituted by a particular type of music, dance, and drugs (Bennett 2001; Critcher 2000; Malbon 1999; Marsh 2006; McKay 1996, 1998; Pini 1997; Redhead 1993; Rief 2009; Thornton 1995; Till 2010). Through not including experiential knowledge as a source for their insights, many confirm existing discourses yet again. DJs, journalists and academics might (re)produce particular rave histories for various reasons: the confirmation and accumulation of cultural capital (which might be turned into economic capital), powerful discourses, or conventional methods of source identification and retrieval.

Before the introduction of web 2.0, the internet, social media, and mobile technologies, such methods of source identification and retrieval would be limited to already existing historical accounts of events, and the consideration of rave's dancing participants as more than a dancing mass would require access to the ravers and their experiences. One of the ways in which many music events are described and contextualized is through their playlist and reference to tracks and songs. The identification of rave's music is further complicated by practices at the time, that were used to purposefully hide the identity of musical sources, which prevents the establishment of a musical genealogy: white label records. These records were not identifiable through a sleeve or a label on the actual record, which would commonly hold information about the artists, the song, its catalogue number and derivation or its duration, amongst others. White label pressings were used by both promoters and DJs for a particular purpose. Promoters sold

the records to shops, where white labels attracted a specific audience, one that was curious but also eager to find the next 'big tune' that would galvanize dancers. DJs liked to use them to prevent others identifying their sources and maintaining their cultural capital and commercial value (see Broughton and Brewster 2002; Haslam 2001; Reynolds 2007). If identifying the records themselves might appear difficult, then the performance techniques of DJs would make it almost impossible to trace the musical sources. Rave DJs used the same performance techniques as hip hop DJs, of which Frith says that 'with its cut-ups, its scratches, breaks and samples, is best understood as producing not new texts but new ways of performing texts, new ways of performing the making of meaning' (1996: 114). Without conventional methods of assessing it, such as music analysis through notation or recordings, or the tracing of the roots of such music, the musical material of such raves cannot be adequately identified. It is, for example, a regular occurrence on rave-related Facebook groups that former participants try to identify a track, sample or DJ mix that they heard many times but are unable to identify or source

(https://www.facebook.com/groups/ThunderdomeMCR/?post_id=10156948565161511).

such uncertainty about the music itself has wider implications for the understanding of rave culture in terms of a music culture and dance culture. A lack of knowledge about the music would allow music-related practices such as dance to take priority so that the embodiment of music through dance becomes more important than the studied contemplation of the music itself. Compared to a conventional gig, for example, at which people meet to enjoy the music they know, a rave might invite people to experience a music they do not know. The motivation to attend a rave could, therefore, be partially explained with a desire to hear new music with and through the body. It might also be explained with the desire for a social experience, one at which dance is the bonding element. .

To reframe raves as dance events at which the social aspect if foregrounded, Reitsamer (2016) proposes the use of practice theory. She argues that practice theory blurs the lines of a mind/body dichotomy because mental activity is considered part of social (bodily) practices. What she is suggesting is, in other words, a definition of knowledge as consisting of both theoretical (cognitive) knowledge and experiential (embodied) knowledge. This form of knowledge about and through an event also chimes with Rösing's (2014) request to expand the notion of musical material as inclusive of embodiment and affect, and which leads to the creation of affective communities. It would help to address and unpack the multidimensional character of music that Rösing (2014) identified as being problematic to understand by popular music historians if music is to be considered as more than just the audible; if it is to include the circumstance of music performance and reception, and its mode of listening (2014: 17). Such a change of approach requires not only a different method to identify sources but also a rethinking of methods of source retrieval.

Dance as/in memory

To dance is to gain experiential knowledge and, although acknowledged by many as central practice at a rave, it is under-researched as a mode of 'non-verbal, physical conversation' (Melville 2020: 84) and as a source for writing history. Melville speaks about 'tactical alliances between different communities with a shared desire to produce their own culture' (89-90), and he alludes to such cultures being created through the sociality of dance. Seeing dance as a tool to create affective communities is to provide an example of Frith's assertion that the analysis of music as an aesthetic practice allows conclusions to be drawn about the nature of a group's sociality. This is confirmed by Istvandity's reading of dance:

'Dance is of course the most obvious and common way in which aspects of music can become embodied. The activity of dancing is particularly special as it involves more than just rhythmic entrainment – coordinated dance engages certain parts of the brain not only for motor skills, but for emotions through the release of endorphins'. (2019: 87)

What Istvandity refers to is dance as a form of music, its expression. This immediacy between dance as embodied music poses a challenge for popular music historiography, as common methods of understanding music through, for example, notation or the analysis of lyrics does not get the historian any closer to understanding the meaning that music provides for people who dance to it. Dance is also of the moment, and its ephemeral character means that it is not fixed. Similar to Melville (2020), Wald argues that dance is often forgotten as a social practice in histories, although 'dancing is a particularly intense way of understanding and absorbing music' (2014: 33). Wald promotes an inclusion of dance, as scholars should 'pay attention to dancing and to be aware of the extent to which musical tastes and evolutions are shaped by physical relationships between people rather than by sounds that individuals choose to play or listen to' (2014:33). According to Wald, the reason for academic disinterest in dancing is the prevalence of the mind/body dichotomy and the tendency among music scholars to emphasize the mind over the body. This is something that Reitsamer has tried to change through her proposition of applying practice theory to rave's various cultures.

For lived cultures whose practices can currently be observed or even experienced, ethnographic research (as one form of practice theory) has the potential to combine theoretical and experiential insight if members of those cultures become part of a decoding process for popular music history. The case is different for cultures that have changed their practices over time or even cultures that have ceased to exist. Raves are such example. Here, the retrieval of

experiential knowledge can only take place through memories of musical events. Dance after all takes place in particular space and time and to music and manipulation practices that we are unable to reproduce. Those memories should include verbally articulated memories as well as dance as a form of embodied memory. Istvandity's (2019) work on autobiographical memory shows how the practice of dance is relevant for one's biography, not only with regard to creating personal memories but also to be able to recreate the belonging to an affective community. It not only means that dance connects the individual with the group through a non-verbal practice, but that such relationship is also inscribed in the body to be recalled. The challenge this approach poses to popular music historiography is the need to 'hear' music with a different aesthetic intention/receptivity. This new modality of listening would search for social practices and embodied articulations of meaning. Writing the social history of raves means to find and decode previously ignored sources that help to explain the experience; the musical material that is not notated but needs decoding and translating into writing.

It also means that the strongest or dominant narrative about raves is not necessarily one that can be linked to the cohort of ravers that draw on their lived experience in their forming of a particular cultural memory of their experience. The question then has to be how we make the experience itself as well as a creation of its memory understandable to a cohort that did not take part in raves and lack experiential knowledge. Perhaps a new sensitivity towards that which is commonly perceived as intangible and ephemeral helps historians to 'render musical cultures that are in danger of being forgotten into text' (Melville 2020: 8).

Innovation and invention

The Lapsed Clubber Audio Map is an interactive online map and can be seen as an attempt to capture embodied and affective experiences of ravers through spoken word. The verbal articulation of memories might not wholly address the intangibility of dance and the experience

of rave and its retrieval. The platform does, however, allow ravers themselves to attempt such articulation of experiential knowledge and its central meaning for them. It gives ravers ownership and, equally important, acknowledges their memories as part of rave history. In addition, it allows ravers to narrate their history – potentially with foci which are different to those apparent in existing discourses – and so enables them to re-inscribe their experiences of events and into accounts of rave.

The tags with which contributing ravers can qualify their memories at the site, are a result of the collection of memories at public engagement events, participants' reunion of club nights and subsequent workshops at which volunteers identified and sorted the sources in the form of memories. The map's tags, as created by participants, are: clothes, drugs, friends, politics, environment, afterparties and 'firsts', referring to a variety of experiences that ravers had for the first time. The absence of tags relating directly to DJs is interesting, as is the absent reference to technology. Consequently, one could argue that the map decentres the DJ and their equipment (technology), challenging the role of the dominant narrator in rave history. Instead of a single narrator the map is drawn by many contributors, some of them referencing each other as key to defining rave. Specific details of music was also not considered to capture the quality of collected memories and does not feature as a separate tag. Although many memories do refer to music, they appear to capture not their theoretical knowledge (artists, labels, sounds) but their experiential knowledge. Ravers used the memory of tracks or tunes to narrate their affective relationships with other people and their own emotional responses. A high level of experiential knowledge was necessary to contextualize the narratives, as some references were articulated in a context bound 'code' that was impossible to interpret by professional archivists who had not attended raves themselves. Such references include the names of drugs and related experiences, the relationship between one's state of mind and the event's geography, or local knowledge of the city.

The following three examples serve to show how experiential knowledge is articulated by contributors. They evidence a form of historical narration around embodiment and affect, and the relationship between oneself and others. The first memory was recorded at the reunion party of participants of a club night (Tangled), and a contributor identifying themselves as a parent speaks about experiential knowledge that is cognitively expressed as well as embodied: 'I am actually here tonight with my son, who's twenty two. […] I talked to him so much about Tangled growing up and he has a real appreciation of like music and dancing and he has done it for ages' (anonymous). The parent refers to teaching their son embodied appreciation, which suggests that a different form of aesthetic judgement - most certainly through dance - is applied to their transmission of memory and its understanding.

The second memory is an example of dance as communication and as expressing something that is also felt by the contributor but not articulated verbally. Moreover, it evidences the endurance of his dance as embodied memory:

> 'I saw some guys dancing that night and they really affected the rest of my life […] So I just kind of tuned into that and there was a guy who had a massive impact on me, I still dance like him now because it works. I've been forever trying to emulate him and I saw him that night for the first time'. (anonymous)

This memory serves as a reminder that source retrieval, which is based on written documentation, recordings and artefacts, might not fully capture the nature or 'feel' of an event. The past that is constructed here through the shared experience of dance is able to produce a particular individual collective identity. The memory further shows how that identity is

affirmed through repeated dance routines or moves and suggests that source retrieval of non-written documents would not be impossible.

The third memory relates to a recall of contemporary discourses that were concerned with gender roles, sexuality and communality. Here, the focus on memory of a joint experience on the dance floor provides a space that feels safe enough to communicate outside of those discourses that define the (sexual) role of men and women on the dance floor, which leads to a change of perspective:

'and looking someone else, some other guy who you'd never looked at before, you know, who could have been like "Why the hell are you looking at me for mate?", but you're looking at these guys and they're just like "Yes! This is fucking awesome!" and this was the first time I'd ever felt like that, it was that oneness with the other blokes and it was the same with the women of course, but I guess the thing with men was more profound because where I was brought up it's a very masculine world and all of a sudden those things seemed to be falling away and that was quite important to me, to accept aspects of my personality, which I'd otherwise not been comfortable with up until then and I felt more whole as a person'. (anonymous)

These three memories show how dance and affect are ways of engaging with and retrieving one's past. They also evidence the importance that the dancers place on embodiment as a form of communication, but they also hint at the difficulty of 'decoding' affect and describing affective communities verbally. In such instances, projects such as the Lapsed Clubber Audio Map provide an opportunity to include experiential knowledge in the archiving of popular music events. They also allow for such knowledge to be articulated outside dominant aesthetic

discourses that exist in the media and academia, which might lead to new insights into the social practices at musical events.

Conclusion

According to Rösing (2014), the multidimensional character of music has to be addressed by a new way of writing popular music history and should include a challenging of common historical methods that focus on the identification, filtering and retrieval of events. If one was to understand popular music history less as historic events that can be traced and referred to as having a clear past and future but more of phenomena that include actions and behaviours of people that take part of the shaping of musical life (Rösing 2014: 18), then musical material has to be understood as both individual and collective actions, as well as cognitive and physical engagement. Moreover, such approach incorporates ephemeral and intangible sources. This offers opportunities for historians to gain new insights into a particular culture, movement or moment.

To include experiential knowledge 'from the floor' in addition to familiar accounts of famous DJs or other leading figures in a field allows people to 'get a feel' for the phenomenon in question through a variety of perspectives. One could understand this as a way to make history more real and to bring it closer to the outsider or observer, or the non-specialist. It is also a way of teaching history as being embodied and affective, thus making participants in musical events realize that they are part of popular music history and that their experiences are important to historians of popular culture.

This approach challenges existing evidence and conventional modes of narration insofar as it makes obvious their difficulty of capturing the essence of a particular musical phenomena. Although the importance and relevance of certain events will remain undisputed, discourses of narration might be recognized more easily, and existing sources might be

assessed more critically. With regard to rave history, the identification of embodied sources, particularly dance as memory, reveals that narratives are constructed and have been largely dominated by media discourses. These discourses show a lack of interest in raves as communal events at which people connect through affect. The inclusion of experiential knowledge will allow for raves to also be considered as relevant for one's biography and wellbeing, thus connecting the social and private sphere. The creation of affective communities as the result of participants attending a musical event might also help to explain the popularity of particular musical phenomena that might not be possible to explain through their theoretical knowledge.

The need for a 'definitive history' of rave culture is also called into question if histories are not only constructed through conventional written sources for the sake of information retrieval (and the provision of undisputable evidence) but also through otherwise articulated accounts of affective communities. As a result, source interpretation and assessment of, for example, dance is subjective and dependent on the perspective and distance to the musical phenomenon. A 'truthful' account of rave history might become less important than a consideration of a plurality of possible angles of observing, interpreting and explaining this phenomenon by a variety of people, all of whom contributed to the musical event and its memorialization. Hopefully, a multi-perspective approach might help rave scholars to establish links between historical movements and moments that are currently written out of popular music history. As shown, the apparent impossibility of capturing affective communities and their practices in popular music requires a rethinking of historical methods of source identification and their retrieval. With regard to raves, it might be useful to consider them as part of a dance culture rather than a culture focused on the meanings of specific music, focussing on the practice of dance as tool for emotional and communal bonding. More generally, smaller and less commercially successful events might become important for

popular music historiography through their description of an atmosphere that is relatable to social and cultural moods.

This article is concerned with the source retrieval in popular music history. Using the example of raves as musical events, it shows how dominant discourses in the field fail to acknowledge dance as an embodied practice of sociality expressed through emotion. Distinguishing between knowledge *about* a musical event (theoretical knowledge) and knowledge *through* an event (experiential knowledge), I argue that current histories of rave do not capture their relevance as social events that create affective communities through dance. To combine experiential knowledge and theoretical knowledge of musical events adds a new dimension to popular music history. The descriptions and articulations of a mood or feel for an event might help to understand the popularity of some popular music phenomena but also lead to a multi-perspective portrayal of events and developments.

This is not an easy undertaking, as strong narratives feel safe. There are plenty of written sources which can easily be accessed through existing archives. Also, discourses are easy to reproduce if these same sources are repeatedly used for the narration of popular music. Wald's suggestion to pay attention to silences in popular music history calls for a further exploration of dance as a social practice. The task for the popular music historian is to critically assess existing sources for their embeddedness in dominant discourses, but also to find sources of embodiment and affect, which have to be put into relation to written documentation.

In this context, the role of memories also needs to be considered in relation to past events. Those memories might be possible to be articulated, but they might not, given the terms in which they are 'felt'. The practice of dance could be seen as embodied memory of an experience, mood or feeling, and as one that could be recreated. It would serve as the binding

element between the sociology of everyday life and the historical treatment of events. The embodiment of the feelings and emotions of a musical event is an aspect that needs further investigation and points at the need to consider new modes of listening, communicating and memorizing experiences in order to be able to map history onto them.

Rave history is already starting to include experiential knowledge. The anniversary of key rave events such as the 30th anniversary of the second summer of love in Britain in 2018 or the 25th anniversary of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, have seen a number of exhibitions feature oral accounts of rave moments or displaying perspectives 'from the floor'. Saatchi Gallery's *Sweet Harmony: Rave | Today*, for example, included photographs taken by a member of the Spiral Tribe Collective. They were sourced from a private collection and, although physical in nature, these photographs (and their captions) evidenced the existence of a community and a social purpose. Projects such as *People and Dancefloors* evidence the desire for groups to articulate their sociality through direct participation in projects, working to complement existing discourses with participatory aesthetics. It is clear that more work needs to be done if experiential knowledge is to be identified and selected to add an affective dimension to popular music historiography. It is time to become creative so that new ways can be found to capture, archive, retrieve and interpret embodied experiences of musical events.

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